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By projecting RaGa as OBC hater, BJP hopes to neutralise his campaign

GAME OF THRONE

▶ **AFTER THE SURAT COURT CONVICTED RAHUL IN THE CRIMINAL DEFAMATION CASE, THE BJP MOUNTED ITS ATTACK ON THE CONGRESS LEADER.**

▶ **PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER PRALHAD JOSHI ON FRIDAY HELD A MEETING WITH THE OBC MINISTERS AND DISCUSSED FRAMEWORK TO CARRY OUT A CAMPAIGN AGAINST RAHUL FOR HIS "MODI SURNAME" REMARK.**

▶ **BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT J. P. NADDA HAS INVITED ALL 28 PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE PARTY WHO ARE FROM THE OBC COMMUNITY FOR A DINNER ON MARCH 28.**

Santosh Kumar Pathak | New Delhi

Even as the Congress is holding press conferences and nationwide protests against disqualification of its leader Rahul Gandhi from Parliament, the BJP has formulated a strategy to play on the front foot and is cornering the Gandhi scion for his "anti-OBC remarks".

Talking to correspondent, a BJP parliamentarian from the OBC community said that Rahul has insulted the entire OBC community and in this meeting, definitely party national president will guide on the issue.

Responding to Rahul's press conference, former union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said: "Rahul has insulted the entire OBC community and not only Modi surname. Modi is a community not just a surname. Rahul has a right to criticise but not abuse. If Rahul says that he speaks in public with full understanding, then it is clear that he has intentionally insulted the OBCs. The BJP will hold nationwide campaign against Rahul Gandhi for insulting OBCs."

Campaigning against Rahul from Parliament to road over the "Modi surname" remarks will give an edge to BJP on many fronts in the states which have OBC leaders like SP chief and former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav, former chief minister and RLD leader Lalu Yadav, Deputy chief minister



I and Baghel are both OBCs and Congress has made us CMs: Gehlot

New Delhi: Countering the BJP's OBC pitch after conviction and disqualification of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday stressed that he comes from the same community and is a three-time Chief Minister.

He said among the Chief Ministers of the Congress, both he and his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel are both OBCs.

"I belong to Mali Saini community... and there is just one MLA in the Assembly (from the community) that is me himself but I am a third-time Chief minister in the state," he said at the Congress 'Sankalp Satyagraha' at the Rajghat.

of Bihar Tejashwi Yadav, Chhattisgarh chief minister and Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel and his Rajasthan chief minister and Congress leader Ashok Gehlot, who are considered big OBC leaders.

The BJP is also trying to "expose" the bickerings in the Congress party by raking up the issue.

"Congress has a battery of lawyers. Why they did not appeal for a stay order in Surat

'Duragraha' not 'Satyagraha': BJP

New Delhi: The BJP launched a scathing attack on the Congress and called its 'Satyagraha' as 'Duragraha' on Sunday. Speaking to reporter, BJP leader R.P. Singh said, "It is clear from this what kind of Satyagraha the Congress is doing. The murderer of Sikhs (Jagdish Tytler) has joined this Satyagraha. Congress cannot survive without Tytler. The party invites him to every event."

BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla hit out at the Congress party and said the Satyagraha was a 'Duragraha' against the OBCs & Courts.

Session court, High Court or Supreme Court. Who asked Rahul not to move court. Does Rahul want to become a martyr by cutting his nail," Prasad asked.

Prasad claimed that it may be a part of internal politics of the Congress to remove Rahul to "save" the party.

By raking up this issue, the BJP leaders are trying to prove that everything is not well in the Congress.

PM HIDING BEHIND POWER: PRIYANKA

New Delhi: Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, while addressing the 'Sankalp Satyagraha' at the Rajghat on Sunday attacked the Prime Minister and termed him "coward" and one "who is hiding behind power to save one man".

Priyanka Gandhi said, "It's time to wake up and unite to take on the corrupt and undemocratic government which is trying to silence every voice which is against him, whose PSUs are being sold. They are not Rahul Gandhi's property, but they are the property of the country."

She defended her brother, Rahul Gandhi and said, "The person who during Bharat Jodo Yatra was talking of harmony, unity can't talk about anything which is not in the interest of the country."

"First they termed him papu, but they did not know that Papu was educated in top universities of Cambridge and Harvard. And, one day the Papu started walking with lakhs of people joining him even in snowfall and rain... so they decided to keep him out of Parliament so that he could not ask questions."

"The tide will turn from today... the whole nation will unite to throw the present regime, as the people have overthrown autocratic rulers."

"My father was insulted in Parliament, my brother has been given names like Mir Jaffar. The BJP ministers insult my mother in Parliament," said Priyanka Gandhi.



WWB CHAMPIONSHIPS:

Nikhat Zareen clinches gold

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's boxing sensation Nikhat Zareen defeated Nguyen Thi Tam of Vietnam 5-0 in the final to win her second Women's World Championships gold medal, here on Sunday.

Nikhat started her bout in attacking mode. She didn't let Thi Tam to settle and landed a rally of punches to win the first round 5-0.

The second round also

went in favour of the Indian. Third round was a tough one, as Thi Tam gave her all but she was given a count when Nikhat punched her on her face. Thi Tam, too, managed to land one punch on Nikhat which stunned the entire stadium. The referee gave a count to Nikhat. The match continued and the Indian proved a little ahead in the round and was declared winner.

Maximum GST compensation cess rate for tobacco products capped

New Delhi: The government has put a cap on the maximum rate of GST compensation cess to be levied on tobacco products like cigarettes and pan masala, among other items. The cap is among the 75 amendments made in the Finance Bill, which was passed in Lok Sabha on March 24.

The compensation cess has been linked to the maximum rate of their retail sale price.

As per the Finance Bill, pan masala will attract the maximum GST compensation cess of 51 per cent of the retail sale price per unit.

Currently pan masala is charged at 135 per cent ad valorem. Similarly, the rate for tobacco has been fixed at Rs 4,170 per thousand sticks plus 290 per cent ad valorem or 100 per cent of the retail sale price per unit.

The cess is levied over and above the highest GST rate of 28 per cent.

Mid-air collision between Air India, Nepal Airlines aircraft averted, 2 suspended

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A major accident was averted on Friday when an Air India and Nepal Airlines aircraft came close to colliding with each other over Kathmandu, reports said on Sunday.

The mid-air collision was averted after the warning systems alerted the pilots of both the planes, thus preventing a major tragedy from taking place, reports said.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) has suspended two employees of the air traffic controller department for "carelessness", CAAN spokesperson Jagannath Niroula was quoted as saying by reports.

On Friday morning, a Nepal Airlines plane coming to Kathmandu from Kuala Lumpur and an Air India plane coming to Kathmandu from New Delhi almost collided.

The Air India aircraft was descending from 19,000 ft while the Nepal Airlines aircraft was flying at an altitude of 15,000 ft at the same



location, Niroula was quoted as saying.

After it was shown on the radar that the two aircraft were in proximity, the Nepal Airlines aircraft descended to 7,000 ft, the spokesperson said.

The CAAN has formed a three-member committee to investigate the matter, and suspended the two officers, who were in charge of the control room at the time of the incident, reports quoted sources as saying.

Police stop Youth Congress' torch rally in Delhi

New Delhi:

Delhi

Police on Sunday stopped a torch rally taken out by the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) to protest the disqualification of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha, and also detained the IYC members.



IYC president Srinivas B.V. along with women workers were detained when they arrived at Lutyens' Delhi area. They were made to sit on a bus and taken away. The police said that they did not give permission to carry out the torch rally. Earlier on Sunday, the Congress workers observed 'Satyagrah' at Rajghat to show their solidarity with Rahul Gandhi.

Even as the Delhi Police imposed Section 144 in and around the area of Rajghat, a lot of Congress workers had gathered there.

Mumbai, Jodhpur cops nab man who threatened Salman Khan

Team Absolute | Mumbai/Jodhpur

The Mumbai Police in a joint operation with Jodhpur Police, have nabbed a person from Rajasthan who allegedly sent an e-mail threatening to kill Bollywood mega-star Salman Khan, an official said here on Sunday.

The development followed an FIR registered by Bandra Police on March 18 against a 21-year-old youth Dhakadram Bishnoi in the case, said Jodhpur's Luni Police officials.

The Mumbai Police in the investigations traced the threat e-mail to Rajasthan and shared the information with Jodhpur Police, which tracked it to

Bishnoi.

After zeroing in on his location, a joint swoop was carried out in Luni, and Bishnoi was arrested, said the officials here.

The accused is being brought to Mumbai for further investigation by a Bandra Police Station team.

The youth is also wanted by the Punjab Police in different cases and has some cases lodged against him in that state.

It may be recalled that a week ago, the Bandra Police lodged the FIR against mafiosi Lawrence Bishnoi, his associates Goldie Brar and Rohit for the threat e-mail, sent to a close aide of the actor.

It had referred to the mafia don Lawrence Bishnoi's inter-

view in which he made a chilling claim that "his life's aim was to kill Salman Khan".

The e-mail in Hindi, came from one Rohit Garg, who also wanted to talk with the actor and the police booked him also following a complaint from Salman Khan's team.

The communication also advised that if Salman had not seen the Bishnoi interview, then he should watch it, and if he wanted to close the matter, he must speak with Garg and Brar, face to face, and he (Garg) would arrange it.

The Bandra Police had immediately swung into action, geared up security outside Salman's home in Bandra West and lodged the FIR against the accused.

36 ONEWEB SATELLITES CARRIED BY INDIA'S LVM3 ROCKET BEGIN ORBITING

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh) | Agencies

Indian heavy lift rocket LVM3 successfully took the 36 satellites of UK-based Network Access Associates Ltd (OneWeb) to space on Sunday morning and began orbiting them.

The 43.5-metre tall LVM3 rocket that weighs 643 ton carried 36 satellites, totally weighing 5,805 kg or about 5.8 ton, to the space. The rocket blasted off from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at 9 a.m. here.

Just over 19 minutes into its flight, the LVM3 began to sling the 36 small broadband communication satellites in

low earth orbit (LEO). The satellites will be placed into a 450 km circular orbit with an inclination of 87.4 degrees.

Once all the satellites are put into orbit, the total number of foreign satellites launched by India since 1999 will be 422. OneWeb, is a joint venture between India Bharti Global and the UK government. The Indian space agency ISRO has code-named the mission as 'LVM3-M3/OneWeb India-2 Mission'.

By completing the constellation, OneWeb is taking a pivotal step forward in delivering global coverage including India, the company had said. The Sunday launch is the 18th for OneWeb.

VEDIC MATHS MAY SOON FIND PLACE IN SYLLABUS OF IITS, TOP COLLEGES, UNIVS

ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (UGC), ALONG WITH INDIAN VEDIC MATHEMATICS, INDIAN PHILOSOPHY, INDIAN SANSKRIT AND SCIENCE AND INDIAN AESTHETICS WILL ALSO BE TAUGHT IN THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Indian Vedic Mathematics may soon become a subject in the syllabus of students studying in IITs and other higher educational institutions across the country. Preparations have been made to introduce the subject in various universities.

The UGC has in this regard sought for an expression of interest from the institutions across the country.

According to UGC Chairman, M. Jagadeesh Kumar, higher educational institutions can submit their expres-

sion of interest online before April 30 on the proposal of Indian Vedic Mathematics, Indian Philosophy, Indian Sanskrit and Science and Indian Aesthetics.

Kumar apprised that UGC officially contacted all IITs, Vice Chancellors of all Universities and Principals of all colleges across the country in this regard.

UGC sent a letter to them, which stated that the step has been taken with the aim of development of Sanskrit and to develop quality Sanskrit teaching-learning material. Vedic Mathematics expert A.K.

Tripathi explained that the subject is based on specific formulas, which can be understood easily.

He said: "Their application is simple and they can be easily remembered. It is such knowledge through which the process of calculation also becomes verbal."

Tripathi stated that these formulas apply to all divisions in all chapters of all the branches of Mathematics and there is no such part in pure or applied maths where they are not used.

Vedic formulas can be applied equally in all fields of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, plane and spher-

ical trigonometry, plane and cubic geometry (analytical), astronomy, integral and differential calculus etc., said Tripathi.

According to experts, children can also solve the questions orally and tell the answers with the help of formulas. The entire course of Vedic Mathematics can be completed in much less time than the current mathematical course.

Small initiatives have been initiated in many big and prestigious universities of the country regarding Vedic education. Recently, a Vedic seminar was organised in Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia University.

Ujjain's Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan (MSRVVP) collaborated with Jamia Millia Islamia for the three-day event.

The Education Ministry has taken many other initiatives to promote Vedic education. The UGC in collaboration with the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) organised special lectures in all 45 Central universities and 45 deemed universities across the country.

The state governments were requested to encourage all universities in their respective states to organise such lectures.



PM NARENDRA MODI PAYS TRIBUTE TO WOMAN POWER IN 'MANN KI BAAT'

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday in his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat' paid tribute to woman power.

"This is the time of Navratri, the time to worship Shakti. Today, the potential of India which is emerging from a new perspective, our woman power has a very big role in it. Recently, many such examples have emerged before us. You must have seen Asia's first female loco pilot Surekha Yadav on social media. Surekha ji, setting another record, has also become the first woman loco pilot of Vande Bharat Express as well," he said in the address.

Referring to film producer Guneet Monga, whose documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers' won the Oscar award earlier this month, Modi said, "This month producer Guneet Monga and director Kartiki Gonsalves brought laurels to the country by winning an Oscar for their



documentary, 'The Elephant Whisperers'. "Sister Jyotirmayi Mohanty, Scientist of Bhabha Atomic Research Center has also notched another

achievement for the country. Jyotirmoyee has received a special award from IUPAC in the field of chemistry and chemical engineering."

Referring to women in politics, the prime minister said, "If you look at politics, a new beginning has taken place in Nagaland. In Nagaland, for the first time in 75 years, two women legislators have reached the Vidhan Sabha through their victory."

PM Modi also mentioned women members of the NDRF contingent, which had gone for relief and rehabilitation work in quake-hit Turkey. "India has also deployed a women-only platoon in the peacekeeping force under the UN mission," Modi said.

The prime minister also referred to Group Captain Shalija Dhama, the first woman Air Force officer to get a Command Appointment in a Combat Unit.

Modi also mentioned Captain Shiva Chauhan of the Indian Army, the first woman officer to be posted at Siachen. The prime minister also highlighted the importance of organ donation and solar energy in his broadcast.

No Constitutional provision for Muslim reservation, says Amit Shah

Bengaluru | Agencies

Two days after the BJP government in Karnataka scrapped four per cent OBC reservation for Muslims, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday defended the move, saying there is no provision in the Constitution to provide reservations on the basis of religion.

Addressing a rally in poll-bound Karnataka's Bidar, he slammed the Congress for providing reservation on the basis of religion in the state. Shah said that the reservation for Muslims introduced by the previous Congress-led government in the state was not as per Constitution.

In its last Cabinet meeting before the polls, the Basavaraj Bommai government on Friday scrapped the four per cent OBC reservation for Muslims and distributed it to two dominant communities - Veerashaiva-



Lingayats and Vokkaligas.

The Cabinet decided to move OBC Muslims to the 10 per cent Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category. Shah said the Congress provided reservation to the minority as part of its polarisation politics. "The BJP scrapped that reservation and provided reservations to Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities," he added.

He also inaugurated the 'Garota Shaheed Smarak' and a memorial of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel during his

visit to Karnataka on Sunday. The 20-ft tall statue of Sardar Patel is a symbol of his significant role played by the country's first Home Minister, he said.

He also highlighted the sacrifice of people in Gorata village who were allegedly killed by Razakars of Nizam, the ruler of Hyderabad State, for hosting a 2.5-ft tall tricolour. Sheh said now, a 103-ft tall tricolour has been hoisted on the same land.

The Union Home Minister also targeted Congress party what he calls vote bank politics.

He alleged that the party never commemorated the martyrs of independence and Hyderabad liberation.

"Due to Congress's politics of polarisation and their greed for vote bank, they never commemorated the people who sacrificed themselves for independence and Hyderabadukti," he said.

400 bogus companies struck down in J&K

Srinagar | Agencies

The Registrar of Companies in Jammu and Kashmir has struck off over 400 companies for non-filing of business status, an official said on Sunday.

Continuing its drive against bogus companies in the union territory, the Registrar of Companies exercised powers under Section 10A of the Companies Act 2013 to strike off these companies.

"All the companies who haven't started business and have not filed the report with the registrar were struck off. A due procedure has been followed and an opportunity was given to the company to prove their businesses," a



source in the know of things said.

"The registrar of companies further got the bank accounts of all these companies frozen immediately through DFS and by writing to the banking association. These companies can't use the bank accounts held in

their names once frozen.

"This exercise is believed to be a check on shell companies as the companies should be transparent in their businesses; either you function or take a dormant status as per relevant sections of company law," the source added.

SENIOR TELANGANA LEADER SRINIVAS RETURNS TO CONGRESS

Hyderabad | Agencies

Former MP of Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) D. Srinivas on Sunday re-joined the Congress, nearly nine years after he had quit the party.

The senior leader along with his son Dharampuri Sanjay joined the party in the presence of Telangana Congress in-charge Manikrao Thakare, state Congress chief A. Revanth Reddy and other leaders.

Srinivas, whose other son D. Arvind is a BJP MP from Nizamabad, reached Gandhi Bhavan, the state headquarters of Congress party, in a wheel-chair.

The former Rajya Sabha member was re-inducted into the party in the presence of senior leaders like K. Jana Reddy, Renuka Chowdary and Uttam Kumar Reddy.

It was a homecoming for Srinivas, who was leading the Congress in undivided Andhra Pradesh when it returned to power in 2004. He twice headed Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) and also served as a minister in the Rajasekhara



Reddy cabinet.

Srinivas had switched loyalties to Telangana Rashtira Samithi (TRS) after it formed the first government in newly carved out Telangana state in 2014. Chief Minister K. Chandrababbar Rao had rewarded him with the post of special advisor to the government and later made him Rajya Sabha member in 2016.

However, on the eve of 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the senior leader

from Nizamabad faced allegations of anti-party activities.

KCR's daughter K. Kavitha, who was seeking re-election from Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency, and other TRS leaders had complained to KCR that Srinivas was working against the party by promoting his son D. Arvind, who had joined the BJP. Kavitha lost the election to Arvind.

Though Srinivas denied the allega-

tions of working against the TRS and tried to meet KCR to clarify his stand, he was denied the appointment and since he remained politically inactive.

In December 2021, Srinivas met Congress leader Sonia Gandhi. She was believed to have given the green signal for his return to the party.

However, Srinivas' return to the Congress was delayed apparently due to health reasons.

Railway Minister conducts first trial run on Chenab River rail bridge in J&K

Jammu | Agencies

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday conducted the first trial run on a track-mounted vehicle on the rail bridge over the Chenab River in J&K's Reasi district - the world's highest railway bridge.

The trial run marks a significant milestone in the completion of the Udhampur-Katra-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link, which will connect the Valley with the rest of the country by train in January 2024.

The Chenab Bridge, which is a part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project, is being anticipated as one of the most magnificent train journeys in the future. After the successful trial run of the track-mounted vehicle, the bridge will soon be operational.



The Minister was accompanied by Northern Railway General Manager Ashutosh Gangal and other senior officials of USBRL Project & Northern Railway during his official inspection visit to the Chenab Bridge.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the trolley run on the Chenab Bridge, Vaishnaw said: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put a laser-sharp

focus on the development of the country.

"Chenab Bridge, all these tunnels, and this will become a lifeline for Jammu and Kashmir.

"The project will connect the Srinagar district with the rest of the country and it is a very important strategic development." "The completion of the Udhampur-Katra-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project will not only boost tourism in the region but will also provide a reliable and safe mode of transportation for people travelling to and from the Kashmir Valley. It will also open up new opportunities for economic development in the region.

"The project has been a top priority for the government and with the successful trial run of the Chenab Bridge, the completion of the project is now closer than ever before," he added.

FIRE FLARES UP AGAIN IN KOCHI'S BRAHMAMPURAM WASTE DUMP YARD

Thiruvananthapuram: Almost two weeks after the blaze there was doused, the Brahmampuram waste dump yard in Kerala's Kochi caught fire again on Sunday, officials said.

The fire was spotted in sector 7 of the dump yard on Sunday afternoon, and five fire tenders have been deployed to douse it. Local people have come out against the corporation and the state government on fire being detected again at Brahmampuram.

Kerala Local Bodies and Urban Development Minister M.B. Rajesh, however, told media persons that the fire was under control as per the information he received from the District Collector.

However former Mayor and Congress leader, Tony Chammyan said that the fire was not doused and that day after Brahmampuram burnt for 12 days, emanating toxic fumes, again fire in the area was a clear example of the failure of the official machinery.

Coast Guard helicopter crashes in Kochi, one injured

Thiruvananthapuram:

An Indian Coast Guard helicopter crashed near the runway of Nedumbassery airport in Kochi on Sunday. The helicopter which was on a training program, crashed immediately after it took off from the Nedumbassery Airport.

Three people were in the chopper; however, there were no casualties. Coast Guard officer Sunil Lotia was injured and has been taken to a hospital for further treatment.

A senior officer with the Cochin



International Airport Ltd (CIAL) said that the accident occurred at 12.25 p.m. and an official of the Coast Guard was injured.

The official said that the runway of the airport has been temporarily shut and a

flight from Oman is diverted to Thiruvananthapuram airport. He said that the runway is likely to be shut for two and a half hours. Two others escaped unhurt in the accident.

Madani to move court against K'taka decision on Muslim quota

Saharanpur | Agencies

The Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, has said that it will challenge in court the Karnataka government's decision to remove Muslims from the 2B category of 'Other Backward Classes' (OBCs), which gave them 4 per cent reservation.

Maulana Mahmood Madani, president of the organisation, termed the move a "grave injustice meted out to Muslims".

Madani told reporters in Deoband that: "The decision does not go hand-in-hand with Prime Minister Modi's Pasmaanda Muslim upliftment. The Prime Minister, on one hand, is promoting development policy for the marginalised section of Muslims, and on the other hand, his party's government in Karnataka is snatching away the reservation from them and distributing it among other classes."

The 4 per cent OBC Muslim quota has been divided between the



Vokkaligas and Lingayats. Maulana Mahmood Madani eligible for quota have been categorised under economically weaker sections (EWS) now.

He argued that various official statistics and reports confirm the fact that the Muslims of India are economically and educationally at the lowest rung of development.

"Hence, no community deserves reservation more than the Muslims," Madani said. Calling the move as "the worst example of electoral opportunism and appeasement", Madani said, "This move only aims to create discord between the two communities. We will approach the court against it."

Noida turning into the next Jamtara; fake call centres spur fraud

Team Absolute | Noida

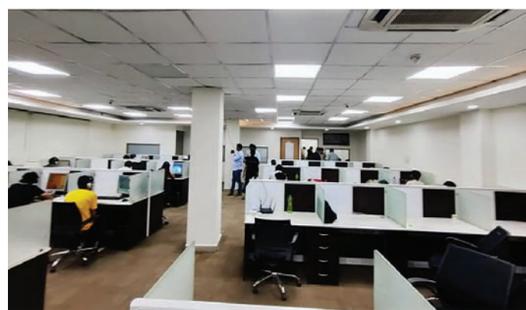
Noida, considered to be an IT hub in Uttar Pradesh, is increasingly becoming a host for fraudulent call centres also. Here, a fraudulent call centre is discovered almost every day.

In their lust for money, cyber thugs endanger the safety of the nation. The owners of the fake call centres, who were apprehended here, train youths, hire them for very little pay, and make enormous profits by getting them to commit fraud. The authorities frequently discover youths working for the centres and in most cases, the mastermind absconds.

Such cyber frauds put India's security at risk as foreigners too get cheated by these centres.

In the last five years, more than 250 fake call centres or telephone exchanges, big and small, have been exposed in Noida and Greater Noida West.

Callers use jobs, insurance and cyber help as topics to cheat people. In some centres, foreigners run the whole company who



remain to be apprehended.

Fraudulent call centres usually target the unemployed people and lure them easily by promising jobs. Along with this, people are cheated in the name of cheap loans, renewing insurance policies, etc.

Other methods witnessed in the past cases include, fraud by claiming to fix a pop-up virus in devices, gifts in lucky draws, fake telephone exchanges to talk to foreigners, child pornography and lucky draws in 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' among others.

Cyber Expert Amit Dubey, in a conversation with said that interstate border areas are favourable and most suitable places for the cyber thugs to commit such crimes, such as Mewat, Jamtara, Nuh, Alwar, Mathura and Noida.

"Cyber criminals work at a different place, live in a different place and commit crimes in a different place. If they fear being caught, they enter another state," said Dubey.

He added that their identities are always found to be fake and

they can be apprehended only on the basis of location, which is why it gets convenient for them to constantly change their locations from the border areas.

Dubey stated that a call centre can be easily set up on a small notice with all facilities in Noida. Foreigners are among the most cheated in these centres as that reduces the risk of being caught due to the distance between them and the victim.

They cheat them by pretending to verify their passports and dupe the foreigners of at least Rs 5,000-10,000 dollars.

Dubey stated that adopting the Zero-Trust model is the best way of defence. He advised that one should not believe the other person immediately and should think carefully before talking freely or sharing sensitive details.

Dubey added that the biggest red flag that one should identify is when the caller asks for money, as no government employee or officer demands money over the phone.

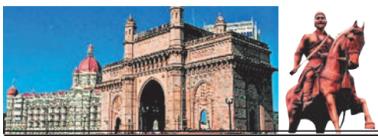
DELHI REPORTS 153 COVID CASES, POSITIVITY RATE CROSSES 9%

New Delhi: Delhi on Sunday reported 153 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours against 139 reported on the previous day, as per the government health bulletin. However, no Covid-19-related death has been reported in the same time span.

Meanwhile, the positivity rate of the city has risen to 9.13 per cent. The number of active cases stands at 528 out of which 340 patients are being treated in home isolation.

With 96 patients recovering in the last 24 hours, the total number of recoveries so far has gone to 19,81,680, while Delhi's total case-load is 20,08,732 and the death toll in the city continues at 26,524.

A total of 1,675 new tests 1,195 RT-PCR and 480 Rapid Antigen - were conducted in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 4,07,79,919 while 150 vaccines were administered - 28 first doses, 53 second doses, and 69 precaution doses. The total number of cumulative beneficiaries vaccinated so far stands at 3,74,04,323 according to the health bulletin.



MAHA'S FAMED TEAKWOOD TO ADORN LORD RAM TEMPLE IN AYODHYA

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

The actors of the epic tele-serial "Ramayana" (1987) and other celebs will join a mega-event on March 29 to celebrate the dispatch of the first consignment of teak-wood from Maharashtra for the ongoing construction of the Lord Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

Maharashtra's Forest Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar said that the decks have been cleared for sending the best quality of the tough and durable teak-wood produced in Chandrapur district for the Ram Temple.

This teak-wood will go into making the temple's main doors, inside doors, the entrance to the sanctum sanctorum, besides any other wooden requirements for the entire temple complex.

The minister said that the consignment will be sent with huge fanfare from the state with a procession, prayers, pooja, dance performances and other events for which prominent personalities have been invited to join.

These personalities include the starcast of the unforgettable tv-series "Ramayan" that was telecast on Doodardarshan 35 years ago - Arun Govil, Deepika Chikhalia, Sunil Lahiri and others, yoga guru Ramdev



Baba, Sadguru Sri Jaggi Vasudev and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, ministers, MPs and MLAs from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh and other dignitaries, he said.

The procession will start at Ballarpur on Wednesday (March 29) with the worship of two ancient trees named 'Ram and Laxman' - which are reputed to have the largest girth in Asia - followed by another procession from the Mahakali Temple. These will see a display of 43 types of folk arts of Maharashtra by 2,100 artists from across the state, with art forms like mallakhamb, dindi, lezim, dhol pathak,



dhwaj pathak, Dashavatar, Gangaur, Tarpa, and presentations on the concept of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

As the processions will end their way, flowers will be showered on the teak-wood, with the roadsides decorated with rangolis and torans on the entire route.

Maharashtra's 'Narishakti' and 'Sade Tin Shaktipithe' tableaux - which bagged the second prize in this year's Republic Day celebrations, and Uttar Pradesh's tableaux that won the third prize - shall also join the Chandrapur processions.

Playback singer Kailash Kher will render

Lord Ram's bhajans and devotional songs at a special programme that evening after the processions end near the Ram Temple in Chanda Chowk. According to Mungantiwar, the Shriram Janmahoomi Teerth Kshetra (SJTK) General Secretary Champat Rai has said that for constructing various doors of the Ram Temple, they were scouting for the best quality wood which is expected to last more than a thousand years. The Ram Temple trust Chairman Nripendra Mishra had met the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun (Uttarakhand) for the purpose which

informed that the best quality of teak-wood in India can be sourced from Chandrapur.

A team of experts from L&T and TCI and the temple engineers checked and tested the teak-wood samples and stocks in Ballarpur and approved it as of top quality, said Rai.

Accordingly, the teak-wood shall be sent through the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra, after which the temple artisans will carve designs and engravings on them as required, and Mungantiwar directed the concerned officers to ensure that the best quality is sent to Ayodhya. It may be recalled that after all hurdles were cleared, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the Ram Temple on August 5, 2020.

Since then, work is proceeding briskly with nearly two-thirds of the works on the main structure completed and the Ram Temple is scheduled for inauguration in January 2024 for millions of devotees.

Rai expressed his deep gratitude to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, and also urged that the first teak-wood consignment should be personally sent by Mungantiwar.

AKANKSHA DUBEY WAS SEEN IN TEARS AMID INSTAGRAM LIVE HOURS BEFORE DEATH

Mumbai: Hours before she ended her life in a hotel room in Varanasi on Sunday, Bhojpuri actress Akanksha Dubey came live on Instagram and was seen breaking down in tears.

Akanksha Dubey allegedly died by suicide at the age of 25. A clip is doing the rounds on social media, where the actress can be seen covering her mouth and crying.

She was found hanging in her hotel room in Sarnath area. She was in Varanasi for shooting of a film.

The police have informed her family of the incident.

Akanksha was born on October 21, 1997, in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. She was fond of dancing and acting from a young age, and so she began her acting career on TikTok and Instagram by sharing her short dancing and acting videos.

She stepped into the world of acting with the film 'Meru Jung Mera Faisla' and was later seen in movies such as Mujhse Shadi Karogi, Veeron Ke Veer and Fighter King among others.

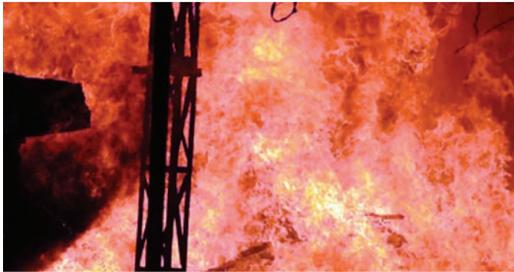
5 suffocate in Mumbai building blaze, all stable

Team Absolute | Mumbai

At least five persons suffered suffocation-related problems when a fire ripped through the fourth floor of a 14 storey MHADA building, the BMC Disaster Control said here on Sunday.

The incident was reported from Building No. P-2 of MHADA Complex in Kanjurmarg, around 9.15 a.m. The blaze broke out in the ground floor meter box room and the wiring, installations on the 4th floor and electricity ducts leading to the upper floors.

The Fire Brigade rushed three fire-tenders to battle the conflagration which was extinguished in



around 45 minutes. Five building residents suffered suffocation-related injuries and were rushed to the Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Hospital where their condition is described as 'stable'. They are: Vimal Jalinder

Sakte, 74, Alka Sakte, 40, Natasha Sakte, 13, Anjali Mavlanekar, 60 and Karuna Ubale 65.

The preliminary cause of the fire is suspected to be a short-circuit and further probe is on.

MAN SEEKING CANCER'S AYURVEDA CURE FOR WIFE DUPED OF RS15 LAKH

Thane: A railway staffer has filed a cheating complaint with Thane police against an Ayurveda treatment centre, an official said on Sunday.

The railway painter said the Centre cheated him of Rs 15.22 lakh promising treatment for his wife who suffers from cancer, the Naupada police station official said.

"He has alleged there was no improvement in the condition of his wife since the treatment started on February last year. Moreover, after some time the personnel at the centre started evading him. Two persons from the Ayurveda centre were charged on Saturday for cheating and other offences," he said. No one has been arrested in the case and probe was underway into the allegations, he added.

Auxiliary Bishop of Mumbai John Rodrigues is new Bishop of Pune

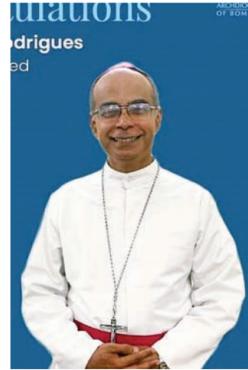
Team Absolute | Mumbai

Pope Francis has appointed the Most Rev. John Rodrigues, Auxiliary Bishop of Mumbai, as the new Bishop of Pune, according to an announcement in Rome on Saturday.

Pope Francis also accepted the resignation of the Bishop of Pune, Most Rev. Thomas Dabe, 77, from the pastoral charge of the diocese.

Bishop John Rodrigues, 56, was born in Mumbai and ordained as a priest in April 1998 for the Archdiocese of Bombay.

Over the years, he served as the Assistant Parish priest at St. Michael Church, Mahim (1998-1999), Secretary of the Archbishop of Bombay (1999-



2000), Professor of Systematic Theology, St. Pius X College, (2002-2011), Secretary of the

Priests' Council, Archdiocese of Bombay (2010-2013), Dean of the St. Pius X College (2011-2013), Archdiocesan Co-ordinator of the "Year of Faith" (2012-2013) and then as the Rector of St. Pius X College,

He obtained a Licentiate in Systematic Theology at the Pontifical Lateran University, Rome (2000-2002).

Bishop John Rodrigues was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay in May 2013 and ordained Bishop in June 2013.

He is the member Bishop of the CCBI Commission for Bible from 2019 onwards.

Currently, he is the Rector of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Mount, Bandra, Mumbai, said Rev. Dr. Stephen Alathara, CCBI Deputy Secretary General.

2 Women murdered in separate incidents in Nagpur, 2 arrested

Team Absolute | Nagpur

Two women were murdered in separate incidents in Nagpur city of Maharashtra, following which two accused were arrested, police said on Saturday.

In Hingna police station area, a 30-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her paramour who raped her in a forest area before smashing her head with a boulder on Thursday on suspicion that she was having an affair with another man, the official said.

In another incident, a woman was allegedly murdered by her live-in partner in



Hudkeshwar area on Saturday afternoon.

Police said the 35-year-old man allegedly smothered her using a pillow at their house.

He called an auto-rickshaw driver stating that his wife was unwell. However, the driver suspected something amiss and alerted the police.

PHYSICALLY-CHALLENGED MAN INFLECTS BURNS ON FELLOW PASSENGER ON LOCAL TRAIN

Thane: A physically-challenged man allegedly inflicted burn wounds on a fellow passenger in a local train in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official from the government railway police (GRP) said on Sunday.

The incident took place in the compartment for physically-challenged persons in a local train from Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus to Kalyan around 10.45 pm on Saturday, senior inspector Pandhari Kande of Thane GRP said.

The accused allegedly set fire to a handkerchief smeared with some narcotic substance and threw it on the victim Prasade Wadekar (35), who sustained burns on his hands, he said.

The victim was admitted to KEM Hospital, where he is undergoing treatment, the official said.

An offence under section 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against the accused, who managed to escape the scene, he added.

Tigress, Cub found dead in Chandrapur, officials suspect starvation

Team Absolute | Chandrapur

The bodies of a tigress and a cub were found in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, with forest officials on Sunday citing dehydration and starvation as possible causes for the death of the cub.

The carcass of the 4-month-old cub was found on Friday evening in Dongargaon beat in compartment 163 of Dhaba range, while a search of the vicinity led to the recovery of the dead body of a tigress on Saturday in compartment 161, an official said.

The site is some 78 kilometres away from the district



headquarters, he added.

"All the organs of the female cub were intact and, prima facie, it seems it died of dehydration.

However, the death of the tigress is under investigation as the body has decomposed," he said.

"Representatives of the

animal husbandry department, forest department and the National Tiger Conservation Authority are probing the case and have already completed the panchnama. Organ samples are being sent to the Forensic Sciences Laboratory here," he added.

OVER 400 MN INDIANS TO SUFFER BECAUSE OF CLIMATE-TRIGGERED CALAMITIES

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As the 2023 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report was released this week, experts again warned of a huge climate-related crisis which could affect over 40 crore (400 million) Indians, and how India remains unprepared to tackle even a fraction of the global warming.

The IPCC-2023 has pointed at the increasing temperatures and the sea-level rise at the global levels, and experts say this has alarming implications for India and many regions particularly the coastal areas.

The experts point out how India is not compatible with a 2 degree C warming and the country may surpass even that based on the current trends, but each fraction would spell catastrophe for 40 crore people, especially those from the marginalised societies, coastal dwellers and those reliant on agriculture for survival.

The IPCC report consolidates 6 reports and spells significant ramifications for policy, said Dr Anjal Prakash of the Indian School of Business and IPCC Lead Author for two of the reports. "Among the most significant implications for India is the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events which pose dire consequences for agriculture, public health and the economy. It highlights the need for policy-makers to prioritise investments in disaster risk reduction including early warning systems, evacuation plans and infrastructure development to protect the vulnerable populations," said Prakash.

The Asian Institute of Technology's Prof Joyashree Roy -- one of the 93 authors of the IPCC synthesis report -- bringing together thousands of scientific studies on the topic said this is the first time 6 reports were published in a cycle and provides very robust science that can influence action in the next few years of this decade.

"It clearly shows that it is theoretically possible to limit warming to 1.5 degrees C, but the current scale and scope, and pace of global action pledged under 2030 is not enough. So, 'we are not on track' is very clearly mentioned with high confi-



dence in the report," said Roy.

Based on the IPCC-2023, experts urged a need to address the current shortfall in climate finances as this (India and the Global South) is the part of the world which has contributed 'least' to climate change, but is also the 'most vulnerable' and affected by the various climate events like cyclones, floods, water scarcity, impact on agriculture, food security and related disasters.

"There is a need to rethink how the climate finance world works and what other efforts can be done to boost the finance opportunities to ensure climate resilience," said the experts. However, it is felt that looking at the Global North for solutions is not an option and it would be too late for action, and hence the need is to look 'inwards', find solutions within India - the world's 5th largest economy -

focus internally, and build national as well as state-specific resilient pathways.

For India and its states, the experts point at major risks from climate change and called for 'urgent action' to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming to well below 2 degrees C, as outlined in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

They want India to take ambitious action to reduce its emissions and invest in adapting measures to protect its people and economy, since we are both a major emitter of greenhouse gases and also particularly vulnerable to its ill-effects. The IPCC-2023 provides a clear scientific basis for decision-making and underscores the importance of action by all stakeholders like governments, businesses and individuals to address this critical global challenge.

The experts said the recent bouts of unprecedented unseasonal rain in different parts of India, was predicted by IPCC reports and climate models, and point out how massive rains just before crop harvesting was never expected.

This has led to huge crop losses for farmers who need to be compensated and such extreme weather events create havoc with the lives and livelihood of people dependent on climate-related agriculture or similar jobs.

"It is alarming and India must take this into account, develop pathways to ensure lives of people impacted due to the changing climate scenario are protected," said Roy. Prakash said there is a strong caution even for Maharashtra which has a 720-km long coastline with the sea-level rising upto 1.1 metres (3.7 feet) threatening coastal communities, cities like Mumbai and its infrastructure, increased flooding and coastal erosion, and other onslaughts by the end of the century as the Earth warms. The state will have higher temperatures with more heat waves leading to major health problems, severe water scarcity for agriculture, industries and homes as Maharashtra depends largely on the monsoon. Flooding could become a common occurrence, agriculture could be hit in many ways with serious implications for crop yields and food security owing to changing temperature-rainfall patterns.



EDITOR'S SPECS

New nasal spray effective against XBB, other Covid variants

Finish researchers have developed a molecule that is, when administered nasally, extremely effective in preventing the disease caused by all known variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including the currently circulating XBB variant.

UNCERTAINTY, VOLATILITY TO DOMINATE LAST WEEK OF FINANCIAL YEAR'S TRADING

Arun Kejriwal

It was an extremely tough and volatile week at the bourses. Markets were all over the place and the small net change at the end of the week, does not convey the overall movement or the sentiment that prevailed.

Markets gained on two of the five sessions and lost on three. BSESENSEX lost 462.80 points or 0.80 per cent to close at 57,527.10 points while NIFTY lost 155 points or 0.91 per cent to close at 16,945.05 points.

The Indian Rupee gained 7 paise or 0.08 per cent to close at Rs 82.48 to the US Dollar. Dow Jones gained on four of the five trading sessions and lost only on the day FED raised interest rates.

The US FED raised interest rates by 25 basis points on expected lines. The rate band is now at 4.75 per cent - 5.00 per cent. This is the ninth consecutive rate hike since the FED began raising rates from March 22.

Further, Jerome Powell, post the announcement has not said or conveyed that there would be an immediate pause going forward. There may be further hikes and then a pause.

After the two banks went down in the US followed by the Swiss bank Credit Suisse, it's now the turn of the German Bank, Deutsche Bank. Shares of the bank have crashed and there is talk on the street that the German regulator would have to step in and ensure a bailout of sorts.

The Finance bill was passed and there were changes which have been made concerning the capital markets. STT has been raised on Futures and Options by 25 per cent. The rate



has been raised from Rs 1,700 to Rs 2,100 per crore. This would in the short term effect volumes on the exchanges. Secondly the contentious issue of taxing the return of loans or debt to the parent in the case of REITs and INVITs has been resolved.

The trading highs and lows made during the week were at 58,418 and 57,084 on BSESENSEX and 17,207-16828 on NIFTY. The lows were made on the very first day of the week, while the highs were made on Wednesday.

Thursday the 30th of March and hence March futures would expire on Wednesday, a day earlier. The present value of NIFTY futures is down 566.20 points or 3.23 per cent for the series.

Coming to the week ahead, key support levels would be at 16,600-16,650 on NIFTY and 56,500-56,650 on BSESENSEX. If this does get broken, we would have strong support a little lower at 16,400-16,450 and 56,000-56,150 respectively.

would be at 17,300-17,350 on NIFTY and 58,600-58,750. The second level needs tremendous buying to be touched or violated.

The strategy for the week would be to sell on any rallies and refrain from overnight positions on most days particularly on Wednesday, when we have a holiday the following day.

(Arun Kejriwal is the founder of Kejriwal Research and Investment Services. The views expressed are personal)

international

RUSSIA TO PLACE TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN BELARUS

Moscow | Agencies

Russia will station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, President Vladimir Putin has said, the media reported.

President Putin said the move would not violate nuclear non-proliferation agreements and compared it to the US stationing its weapons in Europe, according to Russian state media.

Moscow would not be transferring control of its arms to Minsk, he added, BBC reported.

The US said it did not believe Russia was preparing to use the nuclear weapons after the announcement.

"We have not seen any reason to adjust our own strategic nuclear posture," the US Defense Department said in a statement.

"We remain committed to the collective defence of the Nato alliance."

The Belarusian regime is a firm Kremlin ally and supporter of the invasion of Ukraine.



President Putin

President Putin told Russian state television that Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko had long raised the issue of stationing tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, BBC reported.

"There is nothing unusual here either," he said. "Firstly, the US has been doing this for decades. They have long deployed their tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of their allied countries."

Russia will have completed the construction of a storage facility for tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus by 1 July, President Putin added.

A small number of Iskander tactical missile systems, which can be used to launch nuclear weapons, have already been transferred to Belarus, President Putin said, BBC reported.

He did not specify when the weapons would be transferred to Belarus. It will be the first time since the mid-1990s that Moscow will have based nuclear arms outside the country.

The Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 meant weapons became based in four newly-independent states - Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan - with the transfer of all warheads to Russia completed in 1996.

5 dead, six missing in US chocolate factory explosion

Washington: The death toll from an explosion and fire in a chocolate factory in the US state of Pennsylvania has risen to five, authorities said.

The explosion happened at the R.M. Palmer Company in West Reading, Berks County, on Friday afternoon, which destroyed one building and damaged a neighbouring one, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Six people are still missing, according to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. Eight other people were taken to the hospital on Friday evening.

West Reading Mayor Samantha Kaag issued a statement early Saturday morning, saying that "the tragic explosion and loss of life has shaken the community."

"I hope that the remaining victims are found safe and that the community can continue to provide support to those affected by the tragedy in the coming days," Kaag added.

The cause of the explosion is under investigation.

Man to serve 100 yrs in prison for Indian-American child's death

New York | Agencies

A 35-year-old man has been sentenced to 100 years of hard labour for causing the death of a five-year-old Indian-American child in 2021, a judge in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, announced.



Mya Patel was playing in her hotel room in Monkhouse Drive, Shreveport, in March 2021 when a bullet discharged from Joseph Lee Smith's gun missed the target and hit her, media reports said.

District Judge John D. Mosely Jr. sentenced Smith to 60 years at hard labour without benefit of probation, parole or reduction of sentence in connection with the March 2021 slaying of Mya Patel, the Caddo Parish District Attorney's Office announced this week.

The judge also ordered that Smith, who was found guilty of manslaughter in January this year, must serve 20 years for obstruction of justice and 20 years for aggravated battery, for separate convictions associated with the Patel slaying. Those terms must also be served at

hard labour without benefit of probation, parole or reduction of sentence.

On March 20, 2021, Smith got into an altercation with another man in the parking lot of the Super 8 Motel in the 4900 block of Monkhouse Drive in west Shreveport. The motel was owned and operated at that time by Vimal and Snehal Patel, who lived in a ground-floor unit with Mya and a younger sibling. During the altercation, Smith struck the other man with a 9-mm handgun, which discharged a bullet. The bullet missed the other man, but went into the apartment to strike Mya in the head before grazing Snehal Patel. Mya was rushed to a nearby hospital, where she battled for three days before being declared dead on March 23.

Kabul rejects Washington's claim over IS strength in Afghanistan

Kabul | Agencies

The Taliban-led caretaker government in Afghanistan has dismissed Washington's claim over the alleged stronger presence of Daesh or Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan as utterly fabricated.

"The statements of US officials about the number of IS militants in Afghanistan are not true. Daesh militants have already been reduced in ranks and suppressed," chief spokesman of the Afghan caretaker administration Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted.

US Central Command chief Gen. Michael Kurilla, according to media reports, has said "IS is stronger today in Afghanistan" and warned of a possible IS attack on the interests of US and allied nations within six months,



Xinhua News Agency reported. Brushing aside the baseless allegations by the US general on the IS strength in Afghanistan, Mujahid said on his Twitter account, "The interest of the US officials in this matter and their grandiosity is aiding and abetting the IS insurgents, which should be stopped."

The Afghan caretaker government, which has downplayed Daesh, or the IS group, as a serious threat, has vowed to crack down on any armed opponents in the war-ravaged country.

The Afghan security forces have killed four armed militants affiliated with the rival IS group in two separate operations on the outskirts of Kabul over the past week.

Iran vows 'immediate' response to attacks on Syrian bases

Tehran | Agencies

An Iranian spokesman has said that Iran will give "immediate and reciprocal" response to any attack on bases established for "fighting terrorism" in the Syrian territory and at the request of the country's government.

Spokesman of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Keyvan Khosravi, gave the warning in response to recent accusations made by some US officials of Iran "being involved" in attacks on what Iran considers to be "illegal" US bases in Syria, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported on Saturday.

He stressed that the US side, by using "false" accusations, resorted to blame games to escape the possible consequences of its "illegal occupation" of parts of the Syrian territory for its military forces, Xinhua news



agency reported. Khosravi noted that Washington cannot attribute the occupied countries' confrontations with the American forces to other countries by "spreading lies".

Iran has borne heavy costs to "fight terrorism and maintain lasting security" in Syria, he stressed, adding that Tehran would oppose and confront any move that jeopardises Syria's stability.

Iran said it has an advisory role in Syria and is present in the country at the request of Damascus.

The US military airstriking facility in northeastern Syria hours after a drone attack on an American base in the country on Thursday afternoon killed one US contractor, injured five servicemen and another contractor.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin later said in a statement that the "precision airstrikes" targeted facilities in eastern Syria used by groups "affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps".

On Friday night, in response to the US attack, "Islamic resistance fighters" targeted two US bases in eastern Syria with 60 rockets and kamikaze drones, according to IRNA.

A US official confirmed to CBS News that a US serviceman was wounded in the Friday attacks targeting US bases in Syria.



WITH ELECTIONS LOOMING IN THE HORIZON, IT'S RAINING SOPS & PROMISES IN MP

Sundeeep Pournik | Bhopal

Both the Congress and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Madhya Pradesh have been engaged in using every trick to woo voters for the Legislative Assembly elections to be held this year, including making a number of promises in their respective election campaigns.

Both the parties seem to be putting in more efforts for the upcoming Assembly elections since the state witnessed a neck to neck contest between the BJP and the Congress in the 2018 Assembly elections wherein the parties failed to get an absolute majority.

The Congress had won 114 seats in the 230-member Assembly while the saffron party had 109 seats in its fold. Congress then formed a government headed by Kamal Nath, which was later dissolved in March 2020, due to the defection of 22 leaders under the leadership of present Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

The BJP government led by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has



introduced various schemes to gain popularity among voters, including 'Ladli Behna' Yojana through which women of the state will receive a sum of Rs 1,000 monthly. Along with announcing the 'Yuva Niti' pro-

gramme, it has been declared that an amount of Rs 8,000 will be provided to students undergoing training and the fees of recruitment examinations will have to be paid only once a year. The ruling government has also

implemented Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) for the tribal class and also introduced several schemes for the Scheduled Caste as well.

On the other hand, Congress state President Kamal Nath, in an attempt to woo the crucial 48 per cent female voters in the state has announced that a sum of Rs 1,500 will be provided to women when the party forms government. Along with this, he stated that gas cylinders will be given for only Rs 500 to women.

Congress has already said that farmers' loans would be waived off, which also contributed to the party's win in the last Assembly elections.

Political analysts believe that winning the polls would pose a big challenge for both the ruling party and the Opposition Congress.

A tough contest among the two is expected.

Even though the parties are introducing appealing schemes to win the polls, they have not yet come up with an answer to where they would get the budget for the same, said experts.

BJP will win over 200 seats in Madhya Pradesh polls: JP Nadda

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Bharatiya Janata Party president JP Nadda on Sunday said his party would win more than 200 out of 230 Assembly seats in Madhya Pradesh, where elections are set to be held at the end of the year.

He has arrived in the state capital to lay the foundation stone of a BJP office.

"The warm welcome accorded to me by the spirited BJP cadre shows we are going to win more than 200 Assembly seats in MP," he said.

In his address, Nadda said "BJP gave 14 medical colleges to Madhya Pradesh in last nine years--maximum in India." He emphasised that booth presidents should inform public about these developments, their positive impact on individual and state's growth.

He said that MP's contribution in GDP rose to 4.8% from 3%. "And CM Chouhan and his team worked hard to take MP to heights."

He accused Kamal Nath of discontinuing BJP's development policies like Awaas Yojana, Jal Jeewan Yojana, Women Empowerment schemes and more during Congress' 15-month tenure between 2018 Dec to 2020 March.

State BJP President VD Sharma, while addressing workers' convention, assured his boss Nadda of winning 200 seats in upcoming



Madhya Pradesh assembly elections. He emphasised on 'booth ko mazboot' campaign, stating that BJP will 51% votes in every booth.

CM Chouhan in his address praised Modi for his foreign policies. "Ukraine and Russia halted war on Modi's call. The 2018 elections in Madhya Pradesh threw up a hung Assembly, with the Congress emerging as the largest party with 114 seats in the 230-member House, while the BJP won on 109 seats. However, the BJP got 41.02 per cent votes against the Congress' 40.89 per cent.

The Congress formed a government under Kamal Nath, which fell in March 2020 when MLAs loyal to Jyotiraditya Scindia revolted, paving the way for the return of Shivraj Singh Chouhan as chief minister.

MP drive to seize household items over power dues goes awry

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh electricity department's drive to seize defaulters' motorbikes, cattle or tractors has run into trouble. Two state government employees were suspended and an inquiry ordered after videos of an elderly woman running after officials and requesting them not to seize household items circulated on the internet.

Services of two contractual workers who were part of the exercise have been terminated. The Madhya Pradesh Eastern Area Power Distribution Company Limited has started a drive to recover power dues worth Rs 518 crore by the end of this financial year.

Officials of the state elec-

tricity department have started seizing motorbikes, water pumps, tractors and even cattle from the homes of long-term power bill defaulters. Hundreds of villagers across the districts of Sagar, Damoh, Chhatarpur, Panna, Gwalior and Morena have received recovery notices. In many cases, vehicles have been seized.

On Saturday, a team of electricity department officials reached Rekha Ahirwar's home at Deori in Sagar district to recover power dues worth Rs 19,473. Rekha Ahirwar was not at home at the time and her elderly mother-in-law was taking a bath.

It is alleged that the officials entered their home and started taking away a bed and other household items.

The elderly woman said that she pleaded with the officials to not take away the items and also told them that they don't belong to Rekha Ahirwar, on whose name the power bills are issued. She alleged that despite her repeated appeals, the officials seized the household items. The woman said she couldn't even get properly dressed and ran after the officials taking away their furniture and other items.

Visuals of the elderly woman holding on to her clothes and running after the officials on the village streets have gone viral.

Facing criticism over the videos, the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government swung into action, suspended two employees and ordered a probe.

Missionary school sealed in MP after liquor, condoms found during inspection

Team Absolute | Bhopal

A missionary school in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district was sealed after liquor and condoms were found in the principal's room during a surprise inspection.

The inspection was conducted by the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights on Saturday.

The SCPCR team found beds, liquor and condoms and also egg trays and gas cylinders. "I saw there was a gas cylinder and other objectionable stuff, including liquor bottles. Police are investigating the whole matter," Nivedita Sharma, a member of the SCPCR inspection team said, adding that she had brought the matter to the notice of the District Collector.

An FIR has been lodged against the principal of the school and a detailed investigation has been



demanding from the police.

"When we reached there for a routine inspection, we were surprised to know how both corners of the school were attached from the inside... It was a room and liquor bottles and

condoms were found there. It was like a complete residential setup. It does not belong to only one person, but more people came out of the building who were living there. It was being used as an accommodation,"

Sharma told reporter.

She further said that at least 15 beds were lying in that room and there was no CCTV camera.

"The question arises that when CCTV cameras are installed in other locations of the building, why was that particular section left out. If the principal said he wasn't staying there, then who was staying and why 15 beds are present there. More importantly, why does that room have a direct entrance with classrooms of girl students," Nivedita Sharma said.

She further said that liquor is not allowed on the school campus at all. "It is a violation of the law. The excise department is also taking action on the matter as it is also illegal that nobody can keep such amounts of liquor. Some other objectionable stuff, including condoms were also found," she added.

Youth should move forward along with the poor: Governor Mangubhai Patel

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Governor Mangubhai Patel has called upon the youth to go to the deprived and backward areas and make efforts to generate public awareness in the community. He told to take extra care and extend cooperation in taking the poor forward. This will be a true service to the nation and society.

Governor Patel was addressing the annual award and honour function organized by Radharaman Education Group today. The Governor also honored 3 professors, 1 alumnus and 6 students. Governor Mangubhai Patel said that youth have an important responsibility in the development of the nation and society. The students must contribute effectively to social concerns. Students should cooperate in delivering the welfare schemes of the central and state government in rural areas. He told to make the public aware and conscious of the eradication efforts of dis-



eases like Sickle Cell and Tuberculosis. Along with education, he emphasized the need to be aware of health and told the students to be careful about food and drink. Take only necessary and weather-friendly food for health. The tendency to eat anything randomly is harmful. Do yoga and exercise regularly. Governor Mangubhai Patel said that

the Amrit Mahotsav of Independence is a matter of familiarizing the present generation with the glory of the nation's past and preparing the future generation committed to building the future of the nation on the completion of hundred years of independence. It is necessary that the youth, the center of knowledge of the world, India, which is an

example of prosperity and bravery, should understand the reasons for the country's dependence. Embrace the spirit and feelings of the freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the nation. Cooperate in the development of the nation by taking inspiration from their commitment towards the motherland.

Youth Congress president arrested for stopping train in protests over RaGa's disqualification

Team Absolute | Jabua

Madhya Pradesh Youth Congress President Vikrant Bhuria was arrested by Government Railway Police (GRP) from his Jabua residence on Sunday, for allegedly stopping a train at Rani Kamlapati Station as part of protests held over Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Parliament.

During his arrest, Congress workers protested against the police action and gheraoed the police vehicle. The police will bring him to the capital by 5 pm where he will be produced in the court.

GRP station in-charge MS Somvanshi said that a case was registered against 15 unknown people including Vikrant Bhuria, Akhilesh Yadav, Manish Chaudhary under section 143 of IPC (unlawful assembly), and section 145, 147 of Railway Act. Congressmen protested by stopping train on Friday

Notably, Bhuria along with other Congress workers had stopped a train in Bhopal while protesting against Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha on Friday, which led to this action against him.

Congress workers reached Rani Kamlapati railway station in Bhopal at around 5:30 pm on Friday evening. Here, a moving train



going towards Jabalpur was stopped on platform number five. The ruckus lasted for about 15 minutes in which many leaders including Bhuria climbed on top of the engine and shouted slogans. Later, police took control of the situation.

BJP RURAL MANDAL TREASURER ENDS LIFE IN SENDHWA

Sendhwa: BJP rural mandal treasurer and businessman from Goi village of Barwani district committed suicide, only a few distances away from his residence, the police said. The incident was reported on Saturday night at around 9.30 pm, when Monu Agrawal, a resident of Goi village, about five kilometres from Sendhwa on old AB Road poured petrol and immolated himself.

His friends and relatives immediately took him to the private hospital in Sendhwa, from where he was referred to Indore in a serious condition where doctors declared him dead during treatment on Sunday.

Sub-divisional officer (police) Kamal Singh Chauhan said the incident took place near the Goi River Bridge only a few distances away from the residence.

During the preliminary police investigation, it was revealed that Agrawal was involved in the construction business and had a lot of debt, so he committed suicide. SDOP Chauhan said that before taking the extreme step, the matter of posting a post on social media had come to light. In which, he mentioned excessive debt on him.

Meanwhile, he removed the post a few minutes after he posted it. Police are investigating closely at every point, he said.

YADAV POLITICS GATHERS MOMENTUM IN JYOTIRADITYA'S BACKYARD - GUNA

Praveen Dwivedi | Bhopal

Yadav politics seems to be hotting-up in Madhya Pradesh's Guna Lok Sabha constituency, which before 2019 was the impregnable political fort of erstwhile Gwalior State's Scindia royal family.

Seven months before the year-end assembly polls in the state, the opposition Congress on Wednesday made a dent into one of the oldest Yadav families of the ruling BJP in Guna parliamentary constituency, where over 20 per cent or around 3.25 lakh of the total voters hail from the same powerful OBC caste.

Rao Yadendra Singh Yadav, the BJP-supported Ashok Nagar District Panchayat member and elder son of three-time former BJP MLA from Mungaoli seat Rao Deshraj Singh Yadav, joined the Congress.

"My father and my family have for decades been associated with BJP and have built the party in the Mungaoli assembly segment and entire Ashok Nagar district. But in the last three years, since Jyotiraditya Scindia joined the BJP with supporters, the core BJP workers are being ignored and insulted in the entire region, where corruption is rampant now. I've decided to join Congress, after long consultations with people of my area," Yadendra said.

Importantly, Yadendra, his mother and wife - all three are presently Ashok Nagar District Panchayat members with BJP support. His younger brother Ajay Pratap Singh Yadav was appointed vice-chairperson of MP State Backward Caste-Minorities Finance Development Corporation by the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government a year back.



While Yadendra's father Rao Deshraj Singh Yadav was BJP MLA from Mungaoli seat in 1990, 1998 and 2008, he was the runner up from the same seat of Ashok Nagar district in 1993, 2003 and 2013 assembly polls. Also, as the BJP candidate Rao Deshraj Singh Yadav had lost in 1999 from Guna Lok Sabha seat to ex-Union minister late Madhavrao Scindia and in 2002 by-poll to Scindia's son and present Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

Yadendra's switch to the Congress happened just three months after first-time BJP MP from Guna seat Dr KP Yadav's (who had defeated Scindia by 1.25 lakh votes in 2019 LS polls) brother Ajay Yadav had joined the Congress.

Importantly, the Yadav caste constitutes over 20 per cent of the total voters of Guna Lok Sabha seat - whose eight assembly segments are spread in three districts, Guna, Shivpuri and Ashok Nagar. Importantly, the first-time BJP MP from Guna LS seat, Dr KP Yadav (who defeated political mentor Jyotiraditya Scindia in 2019) too has regularly been complaining to government authorities as well the ruling party's state and central leadership, about being ignored at various government events in his own parliamentary constituency.

He has been writing since last many months about his name missing from plaques of foundation laying ceremonies/public unveiling of projects, particularly in Bamori assembly segment, which is represented by Scindia-loyalist three-times sitting MLA and Madhya Pradesh cabinet minister Mahendra Sisodiya.

Recently, the Guna MP's staff has written to district collector, about the defacing of Yadav's image on a water tanker funded by the MP only for Bamori assembly segment in Guna district.



Daniel Radcliffe & Erin Darke ARE EXPECTING FIRST CHILD

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor Daniel Radcliffe, who gained major stardom after playing the titular role of Harry Potter in the film, has confirmed he is expecting his first child with long-term partner Erin Darke.

The star and Darke are due to become parents later this year, reports BBC.com

The actors have been together for a decade after reportedly meeting on the set of the film 'Kill Your Darlings' in 2013.

Radcliffe played poet Allen Ginsberg in the film, and Darke featured as Gwendolyn, a romantic interest.

Radcliffe rose to fame aged 12 when he starred as the bespectacled boy wizard in 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' in 2001. More recently, he starred in the lead role in 'Weird: The Al Yankovic Story', which was released last year.

The biopic follows the life and career of comedian Weird Al Yankovic, who found fame with comical spoof versions of classic songs.

Radcliffe told Newsweek last year: "I want my kids - if and when they exist - I would love them to be around film sets."

Michigan-born Darke is best known for her role in 2015 series Good Girls Revolt, and more recently appeared in Prime Video series 'The



PARIS HILTON DOESN'T WANT HER SON TO WORK IN SHOWBIZ

Los Angeles | Agencies

Socialite Paris Hilton doesn't want her son to be "in the spotlight." The star - who's a mother to a two-month-old baby boy called Phoenix - says that she'd prefer her son to pursue a different kind of career, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"I'm never going to stop my son from doing what he wants to do in life. I'm just hoping he doesn't want to be in the spotlight," she told The Independent.

Paris enjoyed huge success during her own career, but the 'Stars Are Blind' hitmaker insists she doesn't take herself or her public persona too seriously.

She explained, "I can laugh at myself and have fun with the character and play into it. I didn't mind doing that. I feel like that's just a part of me - that character. It's the fun, playful side. But now everyone realises that I'm not a dumb blonde, I'm just very good at pretending to be one."

Paris created her persona during her teens, and it's helped her to deal with criticism over the years. The heiress shared, "I'd say to myself, 'They're not talking about you, they're talking about the character.' It'd make it hurt less."

Earlier this month, Paris revealed that she's loving her experience of motherhood. The reality star and her husband Carter Reum welcomed their first child in January via surrogate, and Paris revealed that she's relished the challenge so far.

She said, "My favourite moments are when he's just laying on my chest and he's looking into my eyes and my heart just melts and I just feel that this is just the most magical time in my life."



Nicolas Cage would love to return as Dracula if "Renfield" gets a sequel

Los Angeles | Agencies

Hollywood star Nicolas Cage is open to returning as Dracula for a 'Renfield' sequel. The actor relished putting his own spin on Bram Stoker's iconic vampire creation for the new movie while the movie has also given him a chance to work with Nicholas Hoult again after first teaming up on 'The Weather Man', reports aceshowbiz.com.

"If there's room for it. I mean, I'm happy with the time that I had to play Dracula for Universal in this film, and I'm very happy I got to support Nic. I've wanted to work with him for a while again. You know, I enjoyed our time on 'The Weather Man'. I think it plays beautifully. I think what he brought to this character is totally brand new, and I'm very happy to be a part of that," he told Collider when asked if he'd return for a follow up.

However, Cage described the opportunity to take on such a legendary role as a once in a lifetime offer. He made the point while noting he "wasn't intimidated" by working on what director Chris McKay referred to as a direct sequel to 1931's 'Dracula'.

He said, "Well, I think that whenever - ; whenever? I mean, that sounds ridiculous. When do you get a phone call from Universal saying, 'We want you to play Dracula?'"

That's never gonna happen again. It's like every, maybe, 100 years? I wasn't intimidated by it because my Dracula's - you know, I'm sure Bela Lugosi's great in the role and he launched a billion viewers, but he wasn't my Dracula."



Reese Witherspoon, Jim Toth had 'zero romance' towards end of 12-year marriage

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actress Reese Witherspoon and her husband Jim Toth reportedly had 'zero romance' towards the end of their 12-year marriage.

The actress recently announced she and Jim made the decision to split up in an emotional statement shared with her 29.2 million Instagram followers, reports mirror.co.uk. The former couple got married on March 26, 2011, in a beautiful ceremony in Ojai, California.

And now, a source has claimed that the duo lost any romantic feelings for each other after the years. "There's no big scandal or drama, just two people who essentially became co-parents and don't really have any romantic feelings for each other anymore," the insider claimed. The source continued to Page Six that

Witherspoon "once liked the fact that (Jim) was just a solid, dependable and stable guy." The actress and Jim were first seen together in February 2010 and it is thought they met each other at work. At the time, Jim worked as a talent agent and co-head of motion picture talent at Creative Artists Agency, where Reese was a client. In an emotional statement on Friday, Reese shared with fans: "We have some personal news to share... It is with a great deal of care and consideration that we have made the difficult decision to divorce." "We have enjoyed so many wonderful years together and are moving forward with deep love, kindness, and mutual respect for everything we have created together." "Our biggest priority is our son and our entire family as we navigate this next chapter. These matters are never easy and are extremely personal. We truly appreciate everyone's respect for our family's privacy at this time."

According to reports, no records of a divorce filing could be found in Los Angeles Superior Court.



Tokyo | Agencies

Musician Harry Styles and model Emily Ratajkowski have sparked dating rumours after the two were seen kissing here. The musician and the model and actress were spotted kissing in Tokyo in photographs and video obtained by The Daily Mail, reports 'People'.

In the photos and video, the duo can be seen sharing several kisses with each other. Styles was captured wearing a white shirt with a black jacket and matching pants, while Ratajkowski was seen sporting a pink and black jacket and a long black skirt. Styles is currently in Japan performing as part of his Love on Tour concert series, which will pick back up in Denmark in May after an extended break.

Styles' rumoured romance with Ratajkowski comes about after the musician's relationship with Olivia Wilde came to an end late last year. Multiple sources confirmed to 'People' in November that the director and actress and the 'As It Was' singer were "taking a break" from their relationship after nearly two years together, noting the "very amicable decision" came amid Styles' continuing touring schedule and Wilde's focus on her children and work in Los Angeles.

A source later told 'People' of Wilde, "She and Harry are good friends, there's no animosity whatsoever." The mother of two and Styles, who met on the set of their film 'Don't Worry Darling' back in September 2020, first stepped out as a couple as they were photographed holding hands while attending a wedding together in January 2021. On a recent episode of her podcast, High Low with EmRata, Ratajkowski opened up about casually dating in the public eye.



Harry Styles & Emily Ratajkowski were seen kissing

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



April Banbury



THIS MEDAL IS FOR INDIA: WORLD CHAMPION NIKHAT ZAREEN

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Becoming only the second Indian female to have two World Championships gold medals to her name, the country's illustrious pugilist Nikhat Zareen capped off an outstanding campaign at the IBA Womens World Boxing Championship with a stunning victory in the finals at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex on Sunday.

With this victory, Nikhat became only the second Indian female pugilist to win two golds at the World Championships alongside the boxing legend Mary Kom who has claimed a record six gold medals in the competition.

"I am extremely delighted to become World Champion for the second time, especially in a different category. Today's bout was my toughest in the entire tournament and since this was the last match of the tournament I wanted to utilise my energy completely and leave everything in the ring. It was a rollercoaster of a bout with both of us getting warnings as well as eight



counts and it was very close," said Nikhat after her bout.

"My strategy in the last round was to go all out and attack and I felt very happy when my hand was lifted as the winner. This medal is for India and for everyone who has supported us throughout the tournament," she added.

Despite shifting to light flyweight from flyweight for this year's tournament, the 26-year-old pugilist from Telangana adjusted extremely well to her new weight category and performed at the highest of levels throughout the tournament.

She notably topped the top seed and the reigning African champ Roumaysa Boualam of Algeria, two-time World Championships bronze medallist Chuthamat Raksat of Thailand and the Rio Olympics bronze medallist Ingrid Valencia of Colombia. Following Nikhat's triumph, India now have a total of three golds in their kitty at the tournament after the 2022 Commonwealth Games medallist Nitu Ghanghas (48kg) and three-time Asian medallist Saweety Boora (81kg) also won gold for the hosts on Saturday.

LOVLINA BORGHAIN ADDS FOURTH GOLD TO INDIA'S TALLY



New Delhi | Olympic bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain added the fourth gold medal to India's tally at the IBA Women's World Boxing Championship 2023 at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex on Sunday.

She defeated Australian boxer Caitlin Parker 5-2 to take the top prize in the 75 kg category and win her first-ever World Championship gold medal. Lovlina had won the bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics. She is only one of two Indian women to win an Olympic medal in boxing. Legendary boxer Mary Kom has won a record six gold medals in the history of the World Championships.

WPL 2023 Final

Mumbai Indians ride on Sciver-Brunt's unbeaten 60 to beat Delhi Capitals, emerge champion

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nat Sciver-Brunt struck a superb half-century to capitalise on a good show by their disciplined bowlers as Mumbai Indians defeated Delhi Capitals by seven wickets to emerge champions of the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL) in front of an adoring full-house at the Brabourne stadium, here on Sunday.



Sciver-Brunt struck 60 not out off 55 deliveries, hitting seven boundaries and raising 72 runs for the third wicket with captain Harmanpreet Kaur (37) and 39 for the unbeaten fourth wicket partnership with Amelia Kerr (14 not out) to guide them to 134/3 in 19.3 overs after their bowlers Issy Wong, Hayley Matthew and Amelia Kerr shared eight wickets between them as Delhi Capitals were restricted to 131/9 in 20 overs.

Delhi Capitals, who had topped the table for a direct berth into the final, had opted to bat first on winning the toss but could manage only 131/9 in 20 overs, that too because of an unbeaten 52 runs partnership for the 9th wicket between Shikha Pandey (27 not out) and Radha Yadav (27), who hammered 36 runs off the last two overs of their innings.

Mumbai Indians too got off to a poor start as they lost both their openers Hayley Matthews (13) and Yastika Bhatia (4) with only 23 runs on the board.

Captain Harmanpreet Kaur and Nat Sciver-Brunt came together to raise 72 runs off 75 balls for the third wicket, building the innings with patience and caution, and keeping alive Mumbai Indians' hopes.

With Mumbai Indians needing 37 runs off 23 balls, Harmanpreet went for a risky single and was out by yards as Shikha Pandey sent an accurate throw to bowler Alice Capsey, as they slumped to 95/3. Sciver-Brunt found a willing partner in Amelia Kerr as they took Mumbai past the 100-run

mark. With 21 needed off the last two overs, Sciver-Brunt struck a boundary off Jonassen to complete her half-century off 52 balls.

She took a single off the next ball and Amelia Kerr blasted two boundaries off successive deliveries and took a single from the last delivery as Mumbai went into the final over needing five runs from six deliveries. Alice Capsey conceded one run off the first delivery and then Sciver-Brunt struck a brace off the next ball and paddled the third delivery for a boundary to seal victory for Mumbai Indians.

Sciver-Brunt was declared Player of the Match for her brilliant innings. She was also adjudged Player of the Match for her unbeaten 72 in the Eliminator against UP Warriorz On Sunday, she held the Mumbai Indians innings together once again and made all the difference for the title champions of the WPL. Earlier, Delhi Capitals landed in trouble early as Shafali Verma (11), Alice Capsey (0) and Jemimah Rodrigues (9) were out in the first five overs, all three offering easy catches off full-tosses bowled by Issy Wong, who claimed a hat-trick in the Eliminator against UP Warriorz. Captain Meg Lanning, who struck five boundaries in her 29-ball 35, and Marizanne Kapp (18 off 21 balls) added 38 runs in 35 balls for the fourth wicket

partnership but were out at the most crucial juncture as Delhi's innings derailed.

Kapp edged behind off Amelia Kerr and Lanning was run out in the next over after a mix-up with Jess Jonassen as Delhi slumped to 74/5 in 12 overs.

They lost Jess Jonassen (2), Arundhati Reddy (0), Mimmu Mani (2) and Taniya Bhatia (0) in quick succession to slump to 79/9 from where they could only partially recover to 131/9 thanks to the late blitzkrieg by Shikha Pandey (27 not out) and Radha Yadav (27 not out).

The duo hammered 36 runs off the last two overs of the innings, hitting Issy Wong for 20 runs in the 19th over and taking off 16 from the final over bowled by Nat Sciver-Brunt, with Radha Yadav smacking sixes off the last two deliveries of their innings. Issy Wong (3-42), Hayley Matthew (3-5), Amelia Kerr (2-19) shared the spoils as Mumbai Indians set themselves up for a modest chase.

Brief scores

Delhi Capitals 131/9 in 20 overs (Meg Lanning 35, Shikha Pandey 27 not out, Radha Yadav 27 not out; Hayley Matthews 3-5, Issy Wong 3-42, Amelia Kerr 2-19) lost to Mumbai Indians 134/3 in 19.3 overs (Nat Sciver-Brunt 60 not out, Harmanpreet 37, Amelia Kerr 14 not out; Radha Yadav 1-24) by 7 wickets.

ISSF World Cup

Sift Kaur Samra wins 50m 3P bronze, India finish with seven medals

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Indian shooter Sift Kaur Samra won a bronze medal in women's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) event on the final day of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Rifle/Pistol World Cup 2023 at the Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy range on Sunday.

Sift, a medical student and the reigning national champion in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) won bronze -- her first individual World Cup medal - after she shot 403.9 in the top-eight ranking round. China yet again won both the golds on offer on the day.

China ended the competition with eight golds, two silver and two bronze medals to top the competition while India were second and Germany third with one gold, one silver and one bronze each. Sift's medal was India's seventh of the competition and they ended the first ever ISSF world cup stage held outside New Delhi with a tally of one gold (won by Sarabjot Singh in the men's 10m air pistol), one silver and five bronze medals.

Manini Kaushik missed out narrowly in qualification, shooting 584 to finish ninth



while Anjum Moudgil shot 583 to finish 13th overall. Two other Indians in the field, Shriyanka Sadangi and Ashi Chouksey who were playing for ranking points only, shot scores of 582 and 581 respectively.

India's Vijayveer Sidhu came closest to qualifying for the ranking round matches among Indians, shooting 581 to finish ninth. Anish Bhanwala shot 581 to finish 10th while Ankur Goel was further back in 14th with 574. Bhavesh Shekhawat shot 578 and Mandeep Singh 575 while playing for ranking points only.

IPL 2023

Big hitters & consistent run-scorers: Top 5 batters to keep an eye on

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Cricketers will have their eyes glued to the television screens when the battle to glory between 10 franchises commences for the coveted Indian Premier League (IPL) title from March 31.

As the countdown to the cash-rich league draws to a close, let's take a look at the top five batters who have been in red-hot form recently, and can take the field by storm. Jos Buttler (Rajasthan Royals), the swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batsman will be out to make an impact as Rajasthan Royals hope to utilise his international experience to end their long run for a second title.

The right-handed English batter was the Orange Cap holder in the previous edition, scoring 863 runs in 17 games, including four tons and as many as half-centuries. After his scintillating show last year, all eyes will be on Buttler to see whether he can maintain his aggressive performance this year and what else he has in his arsenal to offer with the bat. Shubman Gill (Gujarat Titans), Shubman Gill, who hammered his maiden T20I century against New Zealand earlier this year, had amassed 483 runs for Gujarat Titans last year, helping Titans win their maiden IPL title in their debut season. He remained unbeaten on 45 in the final against Rajasthan Royals.

Gill has drawn immense praise from all quarters for his scintillating form and has cemented his place as India's opener in white ball cricket, slamming four centuries this year.

I LIKE THE PASSION VIRAT KOHLI HAS FOR THE GAME: CHRIS GAYLE

Ahead of the 2023 season of the Indian Premier League (IPL), swashbuckling left-handed batter Chris Gayle looked back on his time with talismanic batter Virat Kohli while playing for the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), and complimented his passion and work ethic.

Bengaluru | Agencies

We had some great memories batting together. Those moments we will always cherish. Those dance moves off the field also, I am sure you can see them on social media, I will cherish those things as well."

"Batting with Virat was just fantastic. I like the passion he has for the game. I like his passion and his work ethic, it's fantastic. You have to give him credit for that and he wants to show it with his performances," Gayle said. For the seven years Gayle was at RCB, he and Kohli toyed with the opposition bowling attacks, sending the Chinnaswamy Stadium into fren-



zy. However, Gayle wants everyone to remember it was not only fours and sixes that did the trick for them, pointing out that a lot of attention to running between wickets yielded rich dividends. "We had a good understanding with each other. We complemented each other well. Sometimes people might say 'Chris didn't run between the wickets'. I bat with Virat, and I ran between the wickets, so I don't want anyone to use this as an alibi to say we don't run between the wickets."

"We have over nine (ten) 100-run partnerships, check how many times and how many twos and threes we took. I was the quickest one between the wickets. Don't get it twisted," he said.

Argentine Football Association names training complex after Lionel Messi

Buenos Aires | Agencies

Argentine football star Lionel Messi was honoured in the town of Ezeiza on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, where the Argentine Football Association (AFA) named its training complex after the national team captain.

"Welcome to the home of the world champion. Welcome to the home of all our national teams, that has introduced Argentine football to the world," AFA president Claudio Tapia said.

He indicated that there will be a new sports housing complex on the site, which will also bear the star's name, reports news agency Xinhua.

For his part, Messi



thanked authorities for the recognition and noted that he has been visiting the site for 20 years and feels "a very special energy" every time he enters. "I've been through hard times, but even in those moments coming here helped me forget everything and be happy, something I still feel," the 35-year-old said. "I'm glad that after so long this site is going to bear my name. I'm one of those people who believe that tributes should be made during a person's lifetime," he added.

Would have picked Shubman over me, if I was a selector: Shikhar Dhawan

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Veteran India left-handed opener Shikhar Dhawan has admitted that if he was the team selector he would have picked Shubman Gill over him in the ODI squad, saying that the right-handed youngster is in exceptional form right now.

With Ishan Kishan smashing the fastest ODI double-century against Bangladesh in December last year, and Gill making 624 runs in nine matches, including an ODI double-hundred against New Zealand, so far in 2023, Dhawan wasn't included in India's recent series against Sri Lanka, New Zealand and



Australia at home. "When Rohit took over the captaincy he along with (coach) Rahul Dravid backed me enough. They told me

they wanted me to focus on my cricket and that my vision should be the next World Cup. 2022 was very good for me, I was consistent

in ODIs." But there is this young guy who has been doing well in two formats, and when my form dipped in a series or two then they gave a chance to Shubman and he has lived up to their expectation. We are used to such situations.

When Ishan Kishan slammed a double century against Bangladesh, then for a moment I thought I could be out of the team. As I said, he (Shubman Gill) has been playing two formats and performing well in Tests and T20s. He was playing more matches in the international circuit and I wasn't. So if I was a selector, I would definitely give Shubman the chance," Dhawan said.

Euro 2024 Qualifiers

SPAIN SOAR PAST NORWAY, WALES HOLD CROATIA

Berlin (Germany) | Agencies

Substitute Joselu scored twice in two minutes to spur Spain past Norway 3-0 in Group A, while Nathan Broadhead's 93rd-minute equaliser earned Wales a 1-1 draw with Croatia in Group D of the Euro 2024 qualifiers.

Dani Olmo flicked Alejandro Balde's cross-shot into the net in the 13th minute to set off Spain to a good start in Luis de la Fuente's first match in charge in Malaga.

Coming in as a substitute in the 81st minute, Joselu headed past Orjan Nyland in just two minutes and found the net again from close range one minute later to seal Spain's 23rd consecutive home win in Euro qualifiers, reports news agency Xinhua.

In Group D, Andrej Kramaric's strike in the 28th minute put Croatia ahead, before he and Luka Modric continued to create chances but all were denied by Wales' keeper Danny Ward. Their lead was cancelled in the stoppage time as Broadhead tipped in an equaliser in the 93rd minute on his senior international debut to rescue Wales a point.

Elsewhere, Turkiye defeated Armenia 2-1 in



the other clash in Group D while Scotland began a Euro qualifying campaign with a victory for the first time since 2006 after beating Cyprus 3-0.

In Group I, Winger Renato Steffen's hat-trick powered Switzerland to beat Belarus 5-0. Israel drew 1-1 with Kosovo and Andorra lost to Romania 2-0.

Miami Open

Rybakina saves match point to extend win streak; Mertens wins

Miami | Agencies

World No.7 Elena Rybakina rallied from a set down to defeat former No.2 Paula Badosa 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 in the third round of the WTA section of the Miami Open.

The victory extended Rybakina's current win streak to 10 matches and kept the Indian Wells champion's hopes alive of sweeping a double in Florida. Rybakina will face Elise Mertens in the Round of 16 on Monday. Mertens booked a spot in her first fourth round at a WTA 1000 this season by defeating 29th seed Petra Martic 6-4, 6-3 in a match that ended well after 1:00 a.m. Coming off her



triumph in the California desert a week ago, Rybakina has had to go the distance in her first two matches in Miami. In her opening match, Rybakina defeated Anna Kalinskaya 7-5, 4-6, 6-3. But facing Badosa for the seventh time in her career was a different challenge. While the Spaniard may be struggling to start her 2023 campaign, having dropped down to No.29 in the rankings, Badosa came into the match with a 4-2 lead in their head-to-head.



Big B shares health update, says 'the injuries heal slowly'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan has shared another health update on his recovery after he injured himself on the sets of his upcoming film 'Project K'. Amitabh, who religiously has a meet-and-greet with his fans outside his home on Sundays, took to his blog to share the update.

He wrote: "The injuries heal slowly and today hope the effort is enough to climb the board and wave to the well wishers at the GATE... being away from them that have such sincerity with them is not approved in any manner... the life and the breath of the well-wisher is supreme... they live so I live."

It was earlier in March, when Amitabh suffered an injury during the shoot of 'Project K', in Hyderabad.

The actor shared his health update on his blog. After consulting a doctor and CT scan at AIG Hospital in Hyderabad, he left for Mumbai, where he is taking rest at his home.

Big B suffered a muscle tear to his right rib cage during an action sequence of the film. He wrote that after the incident the film shoot was postponed.

'Project K' is science fiction film written and directed by Aswini Dutt. Being shot simultaneously in Telugu and Hindi, it features Amitabh, Prabhas, Deepika Padukone and Disha Patani.



RAASHII KHANNA WANTS AN INTENSE FILM LIKE "AASHIQUI" WITH KARTIK AARYAN

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Raashii Khanna has expressed her desire to work with actor Kartik Aaryan in a love story just like 'Aashiqui'.

Recently during an interview, while talking about Kartik, Raashii said, "I think with him, I would like to do an intense love story, not a comedy fun genre kind of film

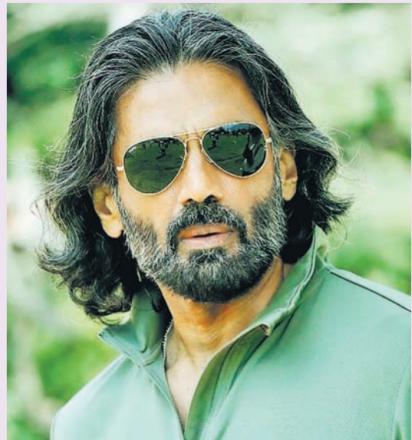
but like an intense film like Aashiqui."

"That film I think will be very nice because I love romantic films and I had done a film and that was the film that was immensely loved by the audience so they love me in a love story. So if I have to do with Kartik, probably a film like that."

On the work front, Kartik has an exciting line-up of films with Satyaprem Ki Katha, Aashiqui 3, and Kabir Khan's untitled next among others.



I am a proud son of my father: Suniel Shetty



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty shares a special bond with his father and daughter. Recently, when he appeared on a singing reality show, he talked about them and how important they are in his life.

For him, his father, Veerapa Shetty is like a God and all happiness depends on Athiya Shetty.

He said: "I am a proud son of my father; I had an amazing bond with him. We should never forget that whatever we are today is because of our parents. We seek God in temple, mosque, and Gurudwara but God is with us in the form of our parents. Always worship them."

During the show, 'Indian Idol 13' contestant Debosmita Roy impressed him with her performance on songs 'Jhanjhariya' and 'Shukran Allah'. While Suniel appreciated her singing, he also talked about the bond he shares with his daughter Athiya Shetty.

He added: "I love the bond Debosmita shares with her father. Their bond reminds me of my relationship with my daughter Athiya. There's so much love between them. I live for Athiya and my happiness depends on her."



I create my own rules; I have no inspiration as such: Kamya Panjabi

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Kamya Panjabi, who is a well-known name in the TV industry and has worked in a number of fictional dramas, is quite satisfied with the way her career has shaped up as now she is making a cameo in the show 'Tere Ishq Mein Ghayal'.

She spoke about her plans of working on OTT and also added that she is not interested in doing any dance reality shows.

The actor enjoys reality shows as she mentioned. "I love reality shows. 'Bigg Boss' is my favourite. It's like a breather. I did get a call for 'Khatron Ke Khiladi', but I can't give my 100 per cent to it. And, if I can't give my best then I won't do it. I have done 'Comedy Circus' and I am not open to any dance reality shows too," she said.

Kamya said she does not have a mentor or guide in the industry. "I create my own rules. I have no inspiration as such," she

added Kamya wants to explore the web space but not at the cost of leaving television. "I am a very content kind of a person. Now I feel relaxed. I want to spend time with my family and go out for holidays also. My in-laws are in Delhi and I want to spend as much time with them as possible. Many people tell me that I am made for the web and I should do it but I am not dying to do it. I love television and enjoy going on shoots every day. TV is my first love. Whenever I do it, I give my 1000 per cent. I give my 12 hours full and finish my scenes and don't like that producer use my duplicate. I am not leaving my first love."

"I am happy here. But yes if I get to do something on the web I will do it but if the condition is to take a break from TV then that's not going to happen. I have got one or two offers as well. In fact, there are a few offers from TV as well; it's currently in the discussion stage. Things might begin from May or June," she concluded.

INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Nushratt Bharuccha



WHEN KAPIL SHARMA WAS BEATEN SO BADLY BY HIS FATHER

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Popular comedian Kapil Sharma recalled his childhood memory when his late father, Jeetendra Kumar Punj, who was a head constable in Punjab Police, had beaten him so badly that his entire locality saw him being punished by his dad.

In a recent promo of 'The Kapil Sharma Show', the host shared a memory with the veteran actor and celebrity guest Raj Babbar in which he talked about his childhood days.

He shared: "I was about 15 years old when my father came home with his friend in a police jeep and kept keys on the table and went inside his room. Out of curiosity, I took the keys and started the car, but didn't know how it began to reverse and hit the vegetable cart standing behind."

"All the bottle gourds on it flew in the air. We all generally see in movies that when kids fall down their parents ask about their well-being. However, with me, until I could keep them back, my dad came out and started hitting me," added Kapil.

Kaveri Priyam shares how to balance 'professional & personal life'

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kaveri Priyam currently seen playing a lead role in the show 'Dil Diyaan Gallaan' shared how she has started realising the importance of relationships more in her life after portraying Amrita in the family drama.

She said: "It's been a while since I started playing the character of Amrita, and I must say that the way the show has depicted life's complexities and showcases how humans drift away due to miscommunications is beyond commendable. I think with 'Dil Diyaan Gallaan', I have become more aware of my parents' feelings and emotions. Now, I consciously make my people feel special and give them the love and time they deserve."

The actress further shared how she makes a balance between her professional and personal life and takes out time for her family.

"I believe that the best way to balance your personal and professional life. There can't be any room for misunderstandings if you communicate with the people you are close to. With such a hectic schedule, I usually don't get to speak to my parents often, but I try to talk to them during my breaks so that even they are updated about my day," she concluded.

